

National Security Oversight Subcommittee Chairman John Tierney (MA 6) issued the following statement in conjunction with postponing the Subcommittee's September 6 hearing entitled, "Bringing Accountability to U.S. Arms Transfers: The Train and Equip Program for Iraqi Security Forces":

"The Subcommittee's planned September 6, 2007 hearing is postponed pending results of continuing investigative proceedings of the Defense Department Inspector General and assessment of additional internal investigations newly ordered within the last two days by the Administration.

The September 6th hearing was scheduled for the purpose of defining a serious safety issue pertaining to our service members stationed in combat, determining what appropriate action should immediately be taken to mitigate danger, and spurring administrative response to the serious facts set forth in the IG and GAO reports on the failure to account for 190,000 weapons in the United States' 'train and equip' program in Iraq. It was important to underscore the sense of urgency that needed to accompany the seriousness of losing track of tens of thousands of weapons.

Since scheduling this hearing, the Administration has announced it is causing immediate investigations to be launched into the missing weapons and related contracting waste, fraud, and abuse. The Subcommittee is also mindful of significant, ongoing criminal investigations by a variety of agencies, including the FBI, the Department of Justice, and the Army Criminal Investigation Command. A full review of the related issues, the appropriate policy options for preventing future occurrences in similar situations, and an assessment as to whether the now-planned administrative actions in fact foster an adequate response will benefit from information expected in the anticipated completed reports from the ongoing investigations.

As a necessary sense of urgency now, we hope, exists, the hearing is postponed. The Subcommittee will expect to schedule hearings in the near future to review progress made in dealing with this serious problem as it pertains to the Iraq conflict, and also as it relates to actions in Afghanistan, other conflict areas, and the establishment of applicable policy going forward. Ensuring that we properly account for arms transfers – whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, or beyond – is crucial for the safety of our men and women in uniform and for our national security, and the National Security Oversight Subcommittee will continue to closely monitor the situation to ensure that this now-promised burst of accountability quickly yields concrete results."